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ABSTRACT

This slide presentation first provides, in a concise form, background information on the Reading Excellence Act program authorized in 1998. It then presents a chart of fourth-grade reading achievement in 1998 from the National Assessment of Educational Progress. It also outlines some findings from reading research and lists the six dimensions of reading from the Reading Excellence Act. The presentation then focuses on appropriate reading skills for children to have from preschool through third grade, gives indicators of reading difficulties, and suggests what volunteer programs and extended learning programs can do. It concludes by listing resources--seven publications and three web sites. (NKA)

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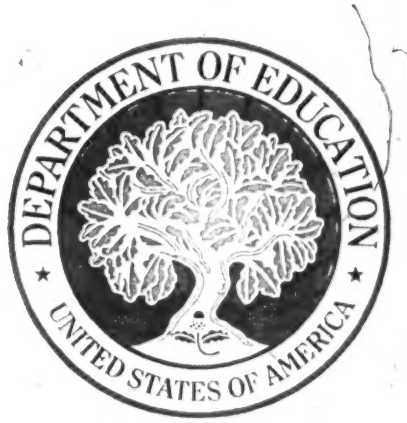

Reading Research

Presentation by
Nancy Rhett
Reading Excellence Team
U.S. Department of Education
at 1999 Summer Institute for the
21st Century Community Learning Centers Program
July 27, 1999

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Background and Contacts

- The Reading Excellence Act program (REA) was authorized on October 21, 1998 (P.L. 105-277). It provides competitive grants to states to improve reading instruction and provide tutoring. The states in turn award competitive grants to specific school districts that are very high poverty or have schools in Title I school improvement.
- First grant awards to states will be made later this week or early next week.
- Contact info: Reading Excellence Program

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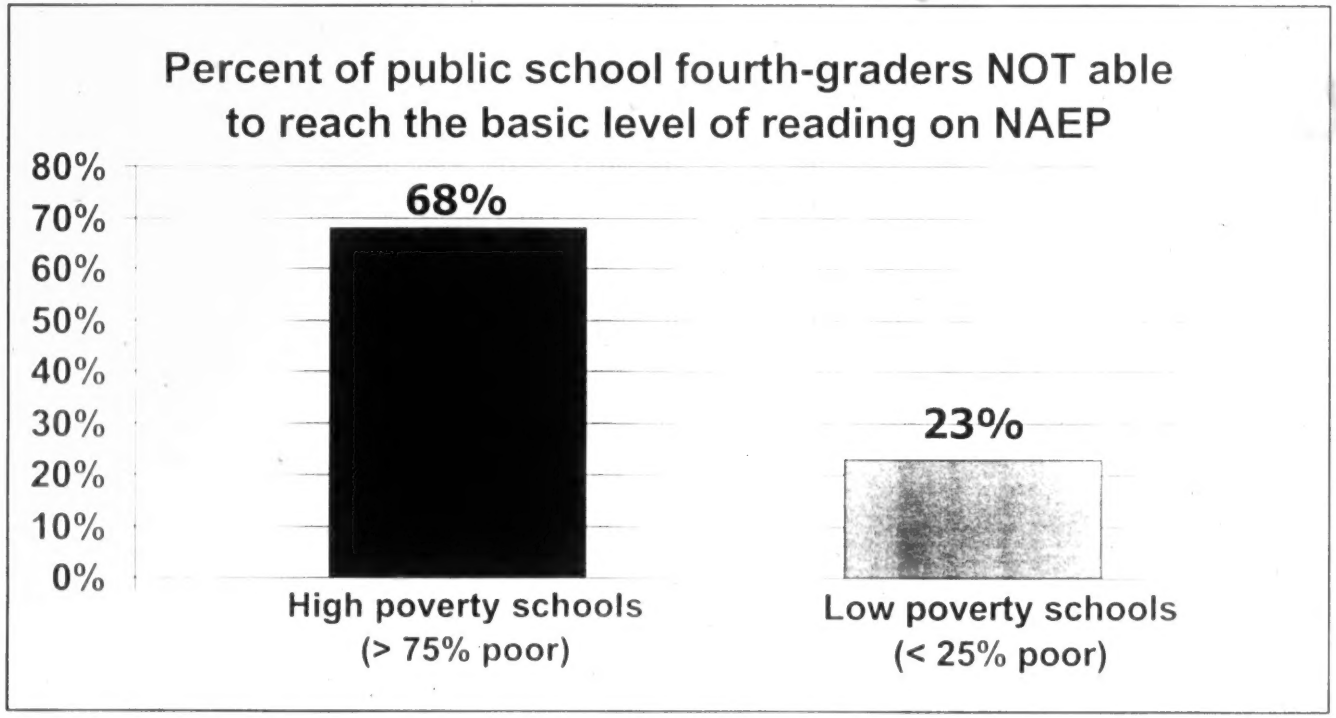
National Assessment of Educational Progress, Fourth-Grade Reading,1998



Reading Research

- **A substantial, cumulative body of research on reading, based on scientific methodology, is now available.**
  - Scientific methodology usually means that researchers used experimental design (random assignment) or high-quality quasi-experiments.
- **More work remains to be done. All the answers aren't settled. Two important areas:**
  - How to apply the research to the classroom. For example, what's the best way to train teachers and tutors to teach reading?
  - Language minority populations.
- **Key finding: Reading is not just the school's job.**
  - Families, communities, volunteers and tutors -- all have important roles to play to help all children learn to read.

Six dimensions of reading
from the Reading Excellence Act

1. Phonemic awareness - Skills and knowledge to understand how phonemes, or speech sounds, are connected to print.
2. Systematic phonics - Ability to decode unfamiliar words.
   Note: What's "unsystematic phonics"?
3. Background knowledge and vocabulary - Sufficient background information and vocabulary to foster reading comprehension.
4 Fluency - The ability to read fluently.
5. Comprehension - The development of appropriate active strategies to construct meaning from print.
6. Motivation - The development and maintenance of a motivation to read.

Preschool

- **Phonemic awareness**
  - Basically oral -- working on the sounds within words.
  - Rhymes, beginning sounds
  - Being able to break up a word into its component units, or phonemes.
- **Oral language development (working on vocabulary and language structures)**
- **Book and print awareness**
- **Listening comprehension**
- **Letter-naming, number naming**
- **Writing (scribbling, pretend writing, starting on letters)**

From *Starting Out Right*

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Kindergarten

- Phonemic awareness -- breaking words into their sounds, deleting and adding phonemes, blending into a word. Understands that the sounds blend into a word in a left to right sequence.
- Letter awareness - alphabet, upper and lower case, letter names.
- Book and print awareness (words, direction, purposes).
- Background knowledge, vocabulary (oral, pictures).
- Language development - syntax.
- Comprehension - questions, predictions
- By end, alphabet, some letter-sound correspondences, simple decoding, some sight words.
- Writing, using invented (phonetic) spelling and regularly spelled words. -- "kid writing."

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First grade

- **Continuing phonemic awareness, letter knowledge, and book and print awareness.**
- **Starts "real" reading.**
- **Decoding, word recognition, oral reading.**
  - Can decode reliably one-syllable regular words.
  - Can use alphabetic principle to identify unknown words.
  - Building a sight vocabulary.
- **Language, comprehension, response to text.**
  - Lots of oral reading, discussion, summarizing, locating main ideas, predicting, and relating to life and other reading.
  - Improving fluency and comprehension, using repeated readings.
- **Writing - correct spelling for one-syllable, short vowel words. "Phonemic" spelling still o.k. for more advanced words. By end is using basic punctuation and sentence structure.**

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Second and third grades

- **Decoding, word recognition, and oral reading.**
  - Building on automatic word recognition, spelling skills, and reading fluency. Decoding regular two-syllable words. Sounding out unknown multisyllable words. Working on prefixes and suffixes; later, on root words.
- **Vocabulary and background knowledge.**
- **Language, comprehension, and response to text.**
  - Improving comprehension by building knowledge of words, language structures, attitudes, and strategies for understanding and using text.
  - Reading and re-reading.
  - Questions, interpretations, conscious strategies, self-monitoring.
  - Learning how to learn from text.
- **Spelling and writing.**
  - Writing becomes much more accurate, following conventional spelling and structure. Can produce a variety of written work.

From *Starting Out Right*

Indicators of reading difficulties

- Failure to understand or use the alphabetic principle (i.e., written spellings systematically represent sounds of spoken words).
- Failure to acquire and use comprehension skills and strategies to get meaning from text.
- Lack of fluency.

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What can volunteer programs and extended learning programs do?

- **Practice and motivational support for children's reading:**
  - reading to children
  - giving children supported practice in oral reading (fluency)
  - building vocabulary and background knowledge
  - holding enriched conversations.

- **Instructional and remedial help (need extra training and supervision, coordination with the classroom)**
  - all of the above, plus --
  - working on phonemic awareness and phonics, word study
  - comprehension
  - writing

Partially From *Starting Out Right*

Resources: publications

- **National Academy of Sciences (National Research Council) (NAS-NRC).** *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children*, **edited by Catherine E. Snow, M. Susan Burns, and Peg Griffin. 1998.**

- **National Academy of Sciences (NAS).** *Starting out Right: A Guide to Promoting Children's Reading Success.* (Same editors as above) **1999.**

- **Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL).** *So That Every Child Can Read. . . America Reads Community Tutoring Partnerships: A Review of Effective and Promising Practices and Volunteer Reading Tutoring Programs.* **1999.**

Resources: publications

- **American Federation of Teachers (AFT).** *Teaching Reading Is Rocket Science: What Expert Teachers Should Know and Be Able to Do.* **June 1999.**
- **National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).** *Learning to Read and Write: Developmentally Appropriate Practices for Young Children: A Joint Position Statement of the International Reading Association and the National Association for the Education of Young Children.* **July 1998.**

Two research articles:

- **Connie Juel.** "What makes literacy tutoring effective?" *Reading Research Quarterly* 31 (July 1996): 268-289.
- **Barbara A. Wasik.** "Volunteer tutoring programs in reading: A review." *Reading Research Quarterly* 33 (July 1998): 266-293.

Resources: websites

- **America Reads Challenge (ARC): http://www.ed.gov/inits/americareads/**

  America Reads provides leadership for the Secretary of Education's reading initiative and special support for extended learning programs.

- **Reading Excellence program: http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/REA/**

  This is a new program providing grants to states to improve reading instruction in high poverty schools. It will add an open listserv later this summer.

- **National Institute for Literacy (NIFL): http://www.nifl.gov**

  NIFL received authority and funding under the Reading Excellence Act for dissemination of information on effective practices for grades K-3 and preschool. Right now their website reflects the other half of their responsibility - adult education.

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Contact REA

Want more information on REA?
A copy of this presentation?

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